



**Office of the Attorney General  
Paul G. Summers**

**NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 31, 2005

#05-01

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**TENNESSEE PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ON SUV  
SAFETY**

Tennessee Attorney General Paul G. Summers today announced Tennessee is participating in a \$27 million year-long national education program to help alert people how to safely handle Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs).

“Our primary goal is to reduce deadly rollover accidents,” Attorney General Summers said. “Although many people feel safer in an SUV, national studies show crashes involving SUVs account for one-third of all accident fatalities. It is extremely important for Tennesseans to realize these powerful vehicles are not invincible and require special care to safely maneuver them.”

All 50 states and three jurisdictions reached a \$51.5 million agreement with the Ford Motor Company in 2002 to resolve allegations of deceptive trade practices related to the sales and advertising of Ford Sport Utility Vehicles. As part of the agreement, Ford agreed to fund \$27 million for consumer education on SUV safety.

The campaign was launched today with Attorneys General and other dignitaries at New York City’s Central Park Zoo. New York City officially proclaimed today, Jan. 31, as SUV Safety Day.

Part of the education effort includes the “ESUVEE,” a newly discovered “beast” that will be the mascot of the campaign. The ESUVEE, which is 10 feet tall, 11 feet wide, 16 feet long and covered in synthetic fur with a moveable head and body, is designed to capture the attention of those who drive SUVs.

The education program runs through the remainder of 2005 and will include television and radio ads, print ads, a web site ([www.ESUVEE.com](http://www.ESUVEE.com)), and ESUVEE visits nationwide, including the Memphis in May festivities in Tennessee.

Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) and Consumers Union show more than four in 10 Americans consider SUVs safer than regular sedans. Those studies also show men between ages 18 and 34 are the most vulnerable and likely

to feel the least sense of risk while driving an SUV. Although SUV rollover accidents account for only three percent of all motor vehicle accidents in the U.S., an SUV occupant is three times more likely to die as a result of rollover than in a passenger car.

Attorney General Summers offers the following tips to avoid deadly rollover accidents:

- \*Check your tire pressure monthly.
- \*Don't overload your SUV.
- \*Always wear your seatbelt.
- \*Avoid abrupt maneuvers.
- \*Don't speed.